Derry Strategic Planning
Group reports to the
community commencing, 1995

REPORT ON RESULTS OF SURVEY I

Derry Strategic Planning Group

June 1, 1995

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This first survey done by the Derry Strategic Planning Group was intended to elicit input from the community as to what should not be changed, what to change and how to change. It was conducted between January 15, 1995 and February 1, 1995. This was not a scientific survey, as the questions were open-ended and no attempt was made to poll a statistically meaningful cross-section of the population. The data from this survey will be used to direct the group in subsequent rounds of surveys. While no statistical significance can be given these results, they do provide insight and direction.

While some respondents were terse and flippant, the vast majority of the responses were well thought out. Some were eloquent. A few responses were received from out-of-towners. Some were typed but most were hand written. A few were several pages in length.

All members of the data committee contributed to the survey effort and preparation of this report. Special thanks are due to Anne Commenator, Chris Cox and Barbara Lilly for the many hours spent entering the responses into the database. Their skills in typing and deciphering handwriting are truly appreciated.

RANKINGS

A total of 207 surveys were received and entered into an SQL database. An attempt was made to categorize responses to questions 1, 2 and 3. Many responses fell into more than one category. Below are the rankings of the categories that had more than 5 responses.

Question 1: What do you like most about Derry?

Count	Category
88	Proximity to Boston, Seashore, Mountains, Manchester, etc.
74	Small town atmosphere, clean neighborhoods, country setting
39	Being close to shopping and services
36	People, Friends, etc.
21	Recreational activities and facilities
18	Negative responses (don't like Derry)
16	Fire, emergency services, Police, low crime
9	School system (before the cuts)
9	Was born or grew up in Derry

Question 2: If you had a vision for Derry, what would it be?

Count	Category
59	Improve the physical appearance of Derry
45	Expanded business and industry
44	Improve schools, restore them to prior quality
43	Control residential growth, less apartments and condominiums
43	Limit or reduce taxes, control spending
27	Improved community relations, unity, harmony, respect
19	Provide more activities and programs for recreation and the arts
17	Improve roads and less traffic
10	Improve public safety, less crime, no pornography
7	Provide Public transportation
6	Control spending on schools

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Question 1: What do you like most about Derry?

Count	Category
84	Proximity to Boston, Seacoast, Mountains, Manchester, etc.
74	Small town atmosphere, close neighborhoods, country setting
39	Family close to shopping and services
36	People, Friends, etc.
21	Recreational activities and facilities
18	Negative responses (don't like Derry)
16	Fire, emergency services, Police, law office
9	School system (before the cuts)
9	Was born or grew up in Derry

Question 2: If you had a vision for Derry, what would it be?

Count	Category
59	Improve the physical appearance of Derry
45	Expanded business and industry
44	Improve schools, restore them to prior quality
42	Control trends that prevent, law enforcement and ordinances
43	Limit or reduce taxes, control spending
27	Improved community relations, unity, harmony, respect
19	Provide more activities and programs for recreation and the arts
17	Improve traffic and lessen traffic
10	Improve public safety, less crime, no pornography
7	Provide Public transportation
6	Control spending on setbacks

Question 3: In order to achieve this vision, what are the first changes you would make?

Count	Category
47	Change administration of the town/schools
44	Restore the appearance of town especially downtown
42	Solve our financial problems
40	Encourage business and industry
35	School recommendations
33	Manage residential growth
29	Improve community relations
20	Improve transportation systems
18	Change form of government or voting procedures
17	Expand recreation, arts and cultural programs and facilities
14	Planning and zoning changes
11	Preserve country-like atmosphere and protect natural resources
6	Improve public safety programs

Question 4: How would you make these changes happen?

Because this question asked for ways to implement the changes suggested in Question 3, the responses did not usually make sense by themselves. So, we did not categorize question 4 responses; to do so would closely mirror the question 3 results.

OVERVIEW

The value of this survey is probably not in the number of similar responses to a given question but in the unique nature of the individual responses. Here, we have attempted to capture the essence of the changes the respondents would make to achieve their vision for Derry. We have focused on question 3 responses in this section. However, in certain instances responses to questions 2 and 4 are also given.

There is a certain amount of inconsistency between the numbers cited above and those in the text below. This is due, largely, to the fact that many responses fell into two or more categories. Some ideas are repeated among the categories below for the same reason.

Many responses were strikingly similar to the thinking prevalent on editorial pages, at the polls, at the annual school budget meeting and elsewhere. Others were unique or occurred only two or three times in the survey. They covered a wide spectrum of ideas on a variety of subjects.

Most people appeared eager to offer their suggestions for change as we requested. However, one person made a case for little or no change with the following comments, "It's not broke so I wouldn't fix it....I came here 25 years ago [and] have no complaints....". This person goes on, "I love Derry, may it not change much!". The following statement by an 18 year resident seems to be more in line with the majority. "We have to demonstrate to the world that we are serious about change." It continues "If we can just channel our efforts toward planning and implementing solutions, instead of fighting among ourselves, THE WORLD WILL LISTEN."

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44	Restore the appearance of town especially downtown
42	Solve our financial problems
40	Encourage business and industry
35	School renovations/additions
33	Manage residential growth
29	Improve community relations
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IMPROVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While divergent views are found throughout the survey, respondents of all stripes seemed to want to find ways to reduce strife and improve community relations. The prevailing mood seemed to be one of frustration, not only with our plight, but with the negativism and divisiveness that is perceived as permeating the town. In spite of this, the vast majority of responses in this category were either pleas for positive change or suggested ways of affecting such change. Some persons addressed general concerns with such comments as, "the town is very divided now" or "Derry cannot continue to exist [,] as it is [,] with dissension it is now experiencing." Others targeted what they view as specific causes for our lack of unity. Contentious politics was blamed in a number of surveys while others cited what they perceive to be negative press or negative organizations.

Dissatisfaction with divisive politics is clear in such comments as "The politics in Derry is as bad as it gets in New Hampshire" or "Demand....that the political infighting be stopped." One person suggested that we, "...improve the political climate where town officials and administrators get along and all work together for the good of the town." Short of removing people from office or position, few specific recommendations were given for affecting this change. Outside professional help to train town officials in consensus building methods was suggested in a few surveys.

That we should come together and work for the good of Derry was stated on many surveys and in many different ways. One survey summed up these ideas with the following:

> "Encourage everyone in town to become part of the solutions and not part of the problem. Encourage PRIDE in the town. Encourage and promote the idea of RESPONSIBILITY in every citizen."

Some called for us to, "Focus on the community as a whole [and] less on specific groups." or to "make it less us against them (renters vs. taxpayers). One response was simply, "Accentuate the positive." Others called for the development of a shared vision for the town. Comments such as, "Get people to agree on a vision" or "now all issues are 50/50 so there is no constancy of purpose." were fairly common. One respondent suggested that we "Have a town slogan and spread it around."

The idea of citizen participation and responsibility seemed to be a common theme. Ideas ranged from citizen involvement in problem solving and policy making to volunteer work projects for town improvement. "Encourage participation from the general sector to solve problems and work with the town and school department with positive input." said one respondent. "Create a Derry cares program and get all ages involved from young teens to senior citizens" said another. Various proposals for special volunteer events or days were offered. One simply said, "Promote neighborhood cleanups -- help for neighbors unable to care for their property."

SOLVE OUR FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Many ideas were provided with an aim to improve Derry's financial situation. The emphasis was on stabilizing and/or minimizing the long-term property tax rate. Suggestions can be grouped in two main categories: 1) Develop additional sources of revenue, 2) Reduce and/or control spending.

The majority of ideas for additional revenue involved developing more business/industry. Other ideas were: to institute a statewide income/sales tax, to seek grant and highway funds, to require developer impact fees, to have year-round fund-raising and donations, to establish user fees at schools, to tax renters and to establish a local income tax.

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To control spending many suggested a limit on residential construction. Other ideas were: to cap spending increases to a fixed percentage, to freeze all budgets, to allow pay increases for merit only, to vote on all town budgets and building projects by secret ballot at annual elections, to make schools more efficient through year-round education and partial privatization, to use volunteers more, to audit all money flow through the town for wasteful spending, to cut teachers' and town employees' pay and benefits, and to hire a consultant to give ideas to save money.

SCHOOLS

Anyone who has lived in Derry for any length of time or has attended the annual school district meeting knows that schools and school funding are contentious issues; so it was with our survey. Responses were about equally divided between those who would improve schools and those who would cap or decrease school funding. Two would attempt to do both. Seventeen respondents gave suggestions for improvements or change.

Of the twenty one respondents who would make schools better, few offered specific ways to raise funding, and several stated they would live with higher taxes. Those who offered methods to raise funds agreed that Derry alone could not do it. One suggested bingo for the schools, several other looked to a university or college to help, and the majority suggested broad based taxes and/or increased state or federal aid.

Nineteen respondents would control school spending. Of them, several were convinced that the administration, teachers, all school employees or the teachers union were the source of the problem and would fire or control them. Some would continue to control services, and some would seek state or federal aid.

Other suggestions included increasing volunteerism to attracting private and parochial schools and using vouchers to increase competition among schools. Some would use the new middle school as a high school or as a school district complex, combining offices and one or two elementary schools.

Schools and school funding continue to be thorny issues. However, as one respondent said, "Change school funding. Make schools more efficient. Experiment. Try to reach a broad consensus on education in Derry." Or as another respondent said, "Derry is headed for destruction..."

PUBLIC SAFETY

All of the 6 respondents who had concerns for Public Safety answered that they would increase police and/or fire services. One respondent was very concerned about the poor driving habits of our townspeople, one would add a motorcycle patrol for our downtown, and one would institute a community watch program.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Forty-eight respondents had direct comments about changing or improving the administration of the town of Derry. These ranged from suggestions for an entire new leadership to controlling the budget or stabilizing turnover. Other respondents (10) want the leadership to be trained, to become more professional or just to pay better attention to the voters. Thirteen respondents listed specific areas to change or actions that would result in improvement. Several of these focused on ways to control spending or to manage the budget. Others suggested hiring and trusting professional administration. Ten respondents specifically mentioned attracting a professional town manager to administer town government and to allow him/her the latitude to get things done. Finally, ten respondents indicated ways in which the town council or school board could be more responsive or suggested training and/or education so that councilors and board members could be more professional.
Now the details -

Six responses asked for removal of incumbents in general, four each demanded overhaul of the entire town council or school board. In many responses a specific individual was named to be replaced. These ranged from council members to school or town administrators. There is a tone in the responses that many feel that town and school officials are serving out of self-interest or they benefit directly from development. There is also a clear feeling that there is a "revolving door" in town administration and that Derry would benefit from a much more stable situation. Language occurs in the responses such as, "put honesty as a priority," "new leadership with vision of the future," or "get people with positive attitudes to run."

Ten people said that the town and school administrations should work more closely together, or be trained to be more professional or just that they should be more responsive. Professionalism and avoidance of conflict of interest are important themes.

There were ten specific responses on the position of the town administrator. Five feel that a seasoned professional with an established track record should be found. Others want the administrator empowered to do the job and for the politicians to stay out of the way. There were thirteen responses with specific administrative changes to recommend. These ranged from employees paying a larger share of health insurance cost to mandatory group counseling for the police. Both the town and school district are cited as not controlling the budget. Several had suggestions for reorganizations and/or new positions.

There is also in several responses on all the above topics a sense expressed that the town must itself come together in a renewed spirit. The problems cited are not just problems of the administration or elected officials but also come from the attitudes and desires of the voters themselves. Several say that there needs to be broader involvement.

CHANGES IN DERRY'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT

There are seven respondents in favor of becoming a city. Three want a return to an elected mayor, and three would like to revert to a town with town meeting. Several suggestions for changes in voting procedures range from phone in voting during televised meetings to placing budget items and warrant articles on ballots so that not only those in attendance at meeting (especially school district) may vote on them. Several people suggested that the school district meeting should be eliminated or should be advisory only.

PLANNING AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Eight respondents state clearly that zoning in general should be changed, most just that it needs to be redone. Several indicate purposes for change (such as retain rural character and resources) or that it should be based on long-range planning.

INSTITUTE LONG RANGE PLANNING

Seven responses indicate a need for a long-range plan. Two of these suggest hiring a professional urban planner. "The master plan must be enforced and updated," says one.

MANAGING RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Twenty-eight respondents cite a need to control growth. Several others suggested actions that would achieve growth management without stating it specifically as a need. Twelve mention keeping, instituting or extending a moratorium on building. The others refer to strict control, "to undo the damage done by unwise embrace of rapid growth," or to "prevent future explosive growth." One suggestion is to assess builders the cost to the infrastructure of their developments.

In addition, nine respondents want a stop to any multi-family dwellings. No conditions are indicated by most of these, just stop.

One respondent suggests "use of economics to discourage large land acquisition by contractors." Two would like to see incentives in place to attract "positive tax contributors," i.e., people who pay property tax but have no children. Finally, two suggest that town leaders should study the successful ways that other communities have controlled their growth.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Forty responses refer to the topics of "business and industry". Most responses in this area requested the town to take some specific action to attract business or industry. In many instances this was coupled with the notion of increasing the commercial tax base in town, and thus lowering the property tax burden on the residential property owner. Specific recommendations included "strongly and aggressively pursue business and/or large manufacturers to create jobs, help with the tax burden [and] to produce economic growth". Others suggested that the town offer "lucrative deals to enhance business to move in". It was noted that our present industrial park is not attractive to business in that it has limited access. Some respondents noted that good transportation systems are important to an attractive industrial park, while others mentioned a full range of utilities and services, including gas, water, sewer, electric and advanced telecommunications. Specific mention was made of the need for either Exit 3A or Exit 4A.

Others recommended that the town pursue one or another specific company. Many respondents noted that we should look for clean, environmentally responsible business and industry. Some respondents noted that Derry needs a specific and active marketing program to attract the types of business and industry that we desire.

RESTORING THE DOWNTOWN

Forty Four respondents refer to the "restoration of the downtown". Two sub-themes emerged: restoring the appearance and aesthetics of the downtown and restoring the economic viability of the downtown. Many consider the outward appearance of the downtown to be a barometer of the town's health, or the center of the town's self esteem. Some responses included quite specific suggestions such as underground utilities, restricted signs, more trees and landscaping, brick sidewalks, colorful canvas awnings. Other respondents were more general, such as "Clean up [the] downtown facade. Make it look like an attractive 'New England town'". One respondent, felt things were really bad, and "would like to see Broadway completely torn down and redone with dignity and class".

Some respondents felt that Derry needs a "downtown redevelopment commission" and some means of encouraging, regulating or financing improvements to downtown store fronts, in order to achieve wide spread improvements among the various merchants.

Many felt that a thriving downtown, with the appropriate kinds of business, professional and specialty retail businesses, is key to the overall economic well being of the town.

IMPROVEMENT IN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Twenty respondents refer directly to improvements in transportation systems. Many would pursue a by-pass route around the downtown, others would seek new exits off I-93. One would replace the rotary with an intersection controlled by traffic lights.

Other suggestions include bus service to Manchester and Salem, including Hood Commons, as well as east/west service along Rt. 102. Generally, it should be easier to get around, and any plan should provide for bike and jogging paths.

PRESERVE COUNTRY-LIKE ATMOSPHERE AND PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

Eleven respondents expressed concern for parks, conservation of land, aquifers, wetlands and the preservation of Derry's rural quality. One said we must "educate townspeople to the value of grooming the town and protecting water and open spaces." Another stressed cleaning up Beaver Lake and preserving it as a recreational facility.

EXPAND RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS OR FACILITIES

On recreational and cultural issues, the common theme echoes getting more facilities to accommodate activities. Suggestions ranged from ice rinks, swimming pools, roller skating rinks and cinema to bike paths, sports fields and entertainment centers. Several respondents would keep historical areas or buildings current and have these places available for all to use. Someone touched on the idea for a teen/senior center. This would provide for those who don't have much to do in Derry today. A number of respondents suggested that recreational facilities be developed by both private and public sectors.

CONCLUSION

There are no concrete conclusions to be drawn from this report -- other than the fact that 207 people were interested enough in the future of Derry to pick up a survey and to write or to type a response. We suspect that many of these people have strong feelings about the various issues and their biases are reflected in the results. On the other hand several common themes emerged that appear relevant to Derry's overall population.

The Derry Strategic Planning Group intends to probe these ideas further. The information here will enable us to focus on areas of town interest as we put together items for future scientific survey's. The results of those survey's should have statistical significance and will be all the more useful to the town because of the information gathered with this survey.

THE DERRY CIVIC PROFILE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Civic Profile is a process by which communities take stock of where they are today and develop an action plan for how they want to operate in the future. Whether the issue is a quality school system, an air pollution problem, lack of adequate affordable housing or solid waste disposal, the need for effective problem-solving skills is the same. A community must have strong leaders, from all sectors, who are able to work together with informed involved citizens to reach agreement on issues. The Civic Profile assists communities to develop their problem-solving ability. It is a self-evaluation tool that draws heavily on the collective wisdom of the participants and is not a test or a comparison between communities. It provides a method for citizens to affirm community strengths, identify concerns and problems, and then to help a community structure collaborative approaches to meet these challenges creatively, set directions for the future, and manage change.

The National Civic League, along with several university studies have identified those qualities that make a community work - that help communities plan for the future and survive such dramatic change as extreme population growth, plant shut-downs or military base closings. These qualities make up the ten components of the Civic Profile and are the "tools" of the community self-assessment:

Community Information Sharing: Getting the right information to people who need it so they can make better decisions for themselves and for their communities.

Community Vision and Pride: Developing a positive self-image around what makes a community special and unique and taking proactive steps to keep it that way.

Civic Education: Doing all that is possible to help a community's citizens "learn the ropes" so that they can contribute to the life of the community.

Citizen Participation: Developing opportunities for people to volunteer for important work in visible, active ways, and making their entry an easy one.

Community Leadership: Ensuring the on-going development of active business, non-profit, and governmental leadership that is results-oriented, looks to the future, and takes appropriate risks.

Cooperation and Consensus Building: Designing ways and forums for sharing ideas, opinions, hopes, and fears in collaborative atmospheres, attempting to achieve common goals, and when there is a disagreement, to discover ways to resolve it.

Regional Cooperation: Working toward region-wide policies and programs to deal with problems and challenges facing a community and its neighbors by crossing traditional boundaries to offer and seek cooperation.

Intergroup Relations: Promoting communication among diverse community groups to form coalitions, understand different views, discover ways to resolve conflicts, and to prevent unnecessary escalation.

Volunteerism and Philanthropy: Creating opportunities and an atmosphere for individuals, groups, and organizations to give to the community in time, knowledge and skills, and dollars, and to honor one another for our contributions.

Government Performance: Seeking the best from government in effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, fairness, and creativity.

To assist cities and towns to strengthen their Civic Infrastructure--those skills, institutions and systems that communities use to solve problems, govern themselves and decide their futures-- the Governors' Commission on New Hampshire in the 21st Century adapted a program from the National Civic League for use in New Hampshire, which they called the Granite State Civic Profile. This was the model that was adapted by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension for use in Derry.

SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR DERRY

The Derry process began when the Derry Strategic Planning Group, after a presentation by UNH Cooperative Extension, decided to undertake a Civic Profile. The Strategic Planning Group became the core group of interested citizens who would be the Civic Profile Steering Committee. The committee identified six goals that they hoped to achieve through the Derry Civic Profile. They were to:

- Develop a fundamental community consensus around a shared vision for the future of Derry that can be built upon by other groups.
- Achieve greater effectiveness in conducting business in a more cooperative and collaborative fashion.
- Invite active participation in the community from those not currently involved in order to enfranchise a broader range of citizens and to expand the leadership pool.
- Learn to share information in more effective and productive ways to facilitate the decision-making process.
- Develop more effective ways to coordinate with various groups working within Derry so that our efforts complement each other.
- Achieve a renewed spirit and sense of community in Derry.

From the Civic Profile itself, the Committee expected that other goals for the community would likely be identified.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

From the very beginning of the process, the Steering Committee decided to include the broadest cross-section of the community as possible in the Civic Profile. In addition to current community leadership, an effort was made to include people who don't usually participate, community activists, and those people in the community who could prevent action on the recommendations. No group or individual was excluded from consideration as a potential participant. It was to be an inclusive, rather than an exclusive process. The Steering Committee identified over 550 individuals who would be contacted directly to participate in the Civic Profile.

The Steering Committee then went through all of the names to try to guarantee that balance was achieved. Again special attention was paid to those people who do not usually participate. Letters were sent to each person on the list. Out of the 564 invitations that were mailed out, 120 indicated that they would attend the forum. Two weeks before the Profile, reminder notices were sent out to the attendees. This notice not only reminded the participants about the meeting but it also told them what they were to bring to the pot-luck supper on Friday evening.

THE PROCESS

Participants met for two sessions, Friday evening June 2nd and all day Saturday June 3rd, 1995 to discuss Derrys' Civic Infrastructure. The Profile began with team building and an over-view of the entire forum. The participants developed a mosaic of what Derry is like now and a vision of what they would like Derry to be in the future. The participants then went into randomly selected small groups of approximately 12 people each, which were led by facilitators from the community who had been previously trained to lead the small group discussions. Each of the ten groups discussed one of the ten (10) components of the Civic Profile. For each component, the group was asked to evaluate two questions:

How is Derry doing now?
What should Derry be doing in the future?

After reaching consensus on the 5-7 most important points identified by the group, the small group facilitators reported their findings to the entire group and the other participants had the opportunity to comment on the reports. Key Civic Issues emerged as common themes.

Next, the participants split into small groups, based on their individual interests, to develop recommendations on methods to implement potential solutions to the Key Civic Issues. Each group was asked to define the following:

Critical steps to implementation

Resources needed

Principal leadership (group or individual)

Potential obstacles with potential strategies to overcome them

Timeline for implementation

Action step coordinator

At the conclusion of the second day's work, each small group reported their findings and recommendations to the entire group. Task groups formed to begin developing an implementation follow up plan of work for each issue.

DERRY MOSAIC

In the first large group session, the participants developed a mosaic of Derry. They said what Derry is now, and what their vision was for Derry in the future.

WHAT DERRY IS LIKE NOW:

* High property taxes
* A community that is trying to work together
* A safe community
* A great location
* A bedroom community
* There are abundant opportunities
* A community that nurtures its young
* An economic melting pot
* Struggling with growth past, present and future
* A welcoming community
* Divided community
* Constantly bickering
* The schools are not as good as they used to be
* It has a unique school system
* A champion school system
* A town of good volunteerism
* An historic community
* Unaware of how big it is
* Lots of activities for children
* No activities for teens (legal)
* Geographically unrealistic "center" of town
* Affected by the media unwarranted bad reputation
* Solving problems independently not relying on state or Feds
* A commuter community

WHAT WE WANT DERRY TO BE IN THE FUTURE, OUR VISION FOR DERRY

* A harmonious community
* A diverse community
* Fewer cars and more bikes (pedal type)
* Safer
* More informed about itself
* Cultural
* More commercial and industrial development to help taxes
* Community that is proud of where it is
* More environmentally conscious
* More inter-generational activities
* A revitalized downtown, not just pizza and sub shops
* Affordable
* Have a local income tax
* School community and municipal community cooperating

* A stable community
* Move away from multi-family development
* A leader in creative financial support of education
* Satellite recreational facilities
* A community swimming pool
* Recreational activities and facilities that are coordinated and affordable for all age groups
* Controlled residential growth
* Channel 38 have a permanent home
* Public library that is funded and staffed appropriate for the size of the community
* Improved traffic flow
* More green spaces
* Public transportation
* Civic Profile be a way of life for Derry not just an event
* Stable tax rate
* Focus on education not just primary but college etc.
* Plan for capital expenditures
* Exit 4-A
* Careful hiring of a town administrator who will stay
* A municipal center
* Inclusive government with tolerance for different ideas
* Easier citizen participation for informed decision making
* Summer programs for teens
* Community self responsibility not rely on others
* A way to derive income other than just property taxes
* A town government that sticks to plans
* A safe trail network
* Have everyone else envy Derry

THE TEN COMPONENTS

After completing the mosaic of Derry, the group then broke down into ten smaller groups to address the ten components to successful community. Each group addressed one of the components and answered two questions, how are we doing now and what should we be doing in the future.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* Good information exists but it is not well disseminated
* Data exists but it is not dynamic
* An individuals perspective changes the information
* The recipients of the information are apathetic (inertia)
* The traditional ways of disseminating information are cumbersome

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Neighborhood coffees with local officials (councilors)
* "Point/Counterpoint" sessions (5-10 minutes) at the beginning of civic organizational meetings public announcements
* Much wider access to information
* Town electronic bulletin boards
* Frequent panel discussions
* Town newsletter
* A community relations position

COMMUNITY VISION AND PRIDE

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* There is a strong civic presence in Derry in the groups
* We are in crisis in the changing times but it is an opportunity
* Improve involvement get more people involved
* Good recreational opportunities for pre-teens

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Focus the volunteer civic organizations with a round table meeting include all the leaders
* Develop an identity with the help of neighborhood meetings
  Get community residents to be more active
* Improve communications
* Improve the appearance of the downtown area using successful models from other communities
* Revise the master plan and commit to following it

CIVIC EDUCATION

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* Lack of understanding of the available tools for civic education
    a) poor tools
    b) lack of advertising
* Involvement based on economics and emotions
    a) lack of long term planning
    b) dual working families
* Too many personality conflicts
    a) lack of respect among officials
    b) personality based voting not issue based voting
* Lost sense of community - lack of civic pride
    a) reactive instead of proactive
    b) voter apathy
* Inconsistency in government
    a) school vs town
    b) changes in type of government

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Develop better communication tools
    a) community pamphlets
    b) calendar of community events
    c) integrate technology
* Improve communication to the public at large
    a) foster a positive image inside and outside Derry
    b) expand positive attitude thru-out the community
* Become proactive instead of reactive
    a) develop long range planning
* Form of government to fit size of the community
* Get youth more involved in government and civic

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* Isolated and fragmented participation
* Participation is remarkably high but focused on diverse and special personal interests
* Lack of communication and visibility (not much positive press)
* Participation is limited because we are a bedroom community
* Perceptions
    a) Derry is very political
    b) Derry is divided and fractional
    c) Derry is positive over all
    d) Derry is a small town- REALITY Derry is large and diverse
    e) Participation is driven by self interest

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* COMMUNICATIONS
* Community calendar
* Easy access to information
    a) printed media
    b) printed guides and bulletins
    c) internet accessible
    d) cable TV
* Bigger central community center a home for TV 38
* Greater visibility for groups
    a) recognition for groups individuals and accomplishments
* Mentoring and encouraging new participants
* Higher percentage of informed voter turnout
* Develop specific measurable goals

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* There have been positive changes in public and not for profit leadership in Derry in the last few years and months for example town council, Derry pride group, playground committee and pathways
* Derry has results oriented not for profit groups taxpayers association, Derry playground, pathways and friends of ED
* There is not enough training for elected officials and board members and it is under utilized
* Private sector leadership can only follow and is limited by public leadership
* Derry has had too few public sector leaders with a long term vision for Derry
* Derry has many effective not for profit leaders and organizations

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Improve the quality of communication between public officials and citizenry and improve civility and increase positive affirmation of public officials
* More cooperation between school and town especially in planning for capital expenditures
* Choose a form of government which will improve cooperation and adherence to long range planning
* Develop ways to discourage or prevent an official from staying in power indefinitely and provide more opportunities for rotating leadership

COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* We lack the mechanism to exchange ideas in a positive environment
* We lack a central forum for individual expression
* There is a tendency for people to talk only in their own group for example the Chamber of Commerce works collaboratively within their own boundaries
* There is too much posturing

* The media could do a better job tends to be negative

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Our goal should be mutual agreement
* Citizen participation in a responsible and accountable manner
* Create neutral forums to communicate (non-biased)
* Establish a dispute resolution group
* Educate people
    a) listening skills
    b) participation skills
    c) collaboration
    d) facilitating

REGIONAL COOPERATION

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* There are regional services now in place ie. hospitals, schools, fire and airport
* Need to better define and communicate the region: geographic, economic and social areas
* Regional and community diversity leads to a lack of cooperation
* Lack of information dissemination
* Structured and unstructured forum to address on or the issue(s)

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Need a forum to foster regional cooperation
* Regional economic growth must be prudent and planned
* Need to better communicate issues facing the region
* Need to establish personal (but not too personal) and professional relationships between civic leaders
* Need to empower a truly representative body which can enact these ideas without infringing on the rights of communities to self-direction and self government

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* Not addressing diversity, lack of awareness how diverse is Derry not all diversity is visible
* Certain groups dominate various aspects of town same people stay in office
* Each group has its own agenda - no compromise, lack of tolerance
* Socio-economic diversity by neighborhoods "haves/have nots"
* Age diversity - lack of opportunity for age integration

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Teach tolerance at an early age and at all levels on a continuing basis
* Professional mediation and collaboration training for ideological and political diversity
* Learn about and celebrate diversity events such as Derry-fest to celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity
* Open avenues of communication what's going on in Derry
* Create programs to facilitate age integration and socio-economic integration

VOLUNTEERISM AND PHILANTHROPY

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* No central communication
* Many untapped resources
* Lots of town volunteer committees
* There are more than 40 non-profit organizations
* There are overlapping efforts

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* Centralized information for needs and resources a menu of opportunities and a paid coordinator
* Rewards and recognition for service certificates or tax credits for volunteerism
* Volunteer clubs (teens, adult and elderly)
* Neighborhood community action groups
    a) block work
    b) play parties
    c) neighborhood tag sales
    d) crime watch
* Basic training for coordinators and participants for volunteer events

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

* Strategic group to advise citizens on the process of government
* Zoning not strict enough
* Need a pro business attitude on the part of government
* Spending is not prioritized
* Not taking the most effective route
* Government is not an efficient organization
* Not open to innovations in spending and funding
* Out of touch with the entire community
* We have outgrown our present form of government
* Government is argumentive, slow and reactionary
* Town is polarized
* Not objective or professional too much favoritism
* Government bodies do not communicate with each other or the citizens

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

* More professional government
* Better communications within the government and with the citizens
* Better cooperation within government
* More efficient spending of tax dollars

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ISSUES:

After reviewing the ten components of the Civic Profile, the participants came to consensus on the key issues that exist in Derry. The eight Key Issues that were identified were: Communication-Dissemination, Communication-Among Groups, Planning, Interrelationships, Community Identity, Physical Aspects of Derry, Citizen Participation and Community Operations. The group then divided into eight smaller groups to discuss the eight KEY ISSUES and their work produced the following results.

I. COMMUNICATION-DISSEMINATION.....Action step coordinator
Barb Lilly, Linda Hickman
Wayne Hickman

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Publicity
* Get data from sources
* Start off line computer database
* Disseminate via newsletter, TV and print media
* Fundraising
* On line wide access to database

Resources Needed

* People who care
* Computers
* Software
* Network
* Telephones and modems
* Database administrator
* Space

Principal Leadership

* On going group meeting frequently
* Technology know how
* Technology ignorant
* Knowledge of town data sources
* Key contact liaison to data sources

Potential Obstacles

* Lack of money
* Time constraints
* Apathy
* Attempts at government control

Timeline

* Today start mailing list for newsletter
* Today generate publicity
* Today collect data
* Today start data base
* Today start fund raising ($2.65 so far)
* July 95 publish newsletter
* June 96 online wide access

II. COMMUNITY OPERATIONS..... Action step coordinator
Temp. Paul Hopfgarten

In the area of Community Operations four specific KEY ISSUES were identified, those were: Town/School coordination and cooperation, Physical locations and centralization, Government 21st Century learning community and Non-government civic operations coordination.

TOWN SCHOOL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Get town council and school board speaking about capital improvements
* Evaluate the potential of combining town and school govt.
* Neutral forum as a conduit to educate the public show choices
* Develop long range strategic plan for the town and school
* Coordinate items inclusive of town council and school board

Resources Needed

* Elect people of good will into elected bodies to support volunteers
* Location
* Cable TV channel 38 coverage
* Planning director (joint effort town and school)

Principal Leadership

* School board/town council
* Neutral forum DSP group
* Interest groups (FOE, DTA, Rotary, ETC.)

Potential Obstacles

* Protect Turf
* Unwillingness to compromise
* Private academy

Timeline

* Fall 95 joint meeting of school board and town council
* 6-9 months Capital projections School Operations Budget committee

* 6 months neutral forum group
* 3-5 years Combined town/school government

PHYSICAL LOCATIONS CENTRALIZATION

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Public input/town input
* Planning and development
* Funding
* Construction

Resources Needed

* Finances
* Site
* Man hours for planning and implementation
* Benefactor

Principal Leadership

* Town administrator and town council
* DDPC
* Civic and public

Potential Obstacles

* Financing
* Availability of land
* Agreement about location

Timeline

* 1 year planning
* 2-3 years bonding
* 4-5 years construction

21st CENTURY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Identify as a goal that Derry is synonymous with the 21st century learning community

Resources Needed

* Revitalize 21st Century Learning Community Committee

Principal Leadership
* 21st Century Committee
* School Board

* Community communications director

Potential Obstacles

* Public awareness of goals and impact to community
* Instability in schools as a result of reactive response
* Availability of funds from private resources

Timeline

* 1-2 years public awareness and develop identity

NON-GOVERNMENT CIVIC OPERATIONS COORDINATION

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Identify groups
* Identify and establish coordinator an individual or group
* Examine the overlap of projects
* Establish connection with town and school governments
* Identify community priorities and needs

Resources Needed

* Civic fraternal organizations and churches
* United way
* Alexander Eastman Foundation
* Chamber of Commerce
* Publicity

Principal Leadership

* Coordinated leadership of civic organizations

Potential Obstacles

* The agenda of each organization
* Inertia

Timeline

* Now establish coordination
* Semi-annual ongoing civic forum

III. COMMUNICATION AMONG GROUPS

In this issue area there were also four KEY ISSUES that were identified and addressed by the small group.

COMMUNITY DIRECTORY..... Action step coordinator
To be determined

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Listing of all government, non-profit, service and business groups in the town

Resources Needed

* Chamber Lynn S. and Vicki C.
* Library and the Derry News
* United Way
* Diane LaPlante
* Computers
* Local printers
* Money from local businesses and Civic groups

Principal Leadership

* Derry Chamber of Commerce
* DSPG
* Derry Community Action Council
* Diane LaPlante
* Derry Pride Committee

Potential Obstacles

* Cost
* People power
* Diverse sources of information
* Research time
* Sensitivity to leaving some group out

Timeline

* July 95 Call meeting
* 8-11 95 Gather data review, raise funds, print and advertise
* Distribute at 95 Derry Christmas parade

DERRY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL..... Action step coordinator
Deede Loffler
Marilyn Olbricht

Critical Steps to Implementation

* To act as a conduit and forum for inter-organizational communications and cooperation

Resources Needed

* Volunteers from town organizations and every organization invited to join
* Meeting spaces: library, WSCC, schools and hospital
* Fundraising

Principal Leadership

* Town of Derry
* DSPG
* Outgrowth of directory group process

Potential Obstacles

* Fundraising
* Turf issues
* Full participation of all groups

Timeline

* July 95 call meeting
* December 95 Infrastructure and organizational model
* April 96 Community group communication matrix
* April 96 All groups exchange newsletetters with each other

DERRY NEWS ISSUE..... Action step coordinator
To be determined

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Positively influencing the Derry News
    a. State legislature and agendas in advance, also votes
    b. Discuss our concerns about limited coverage of weekend events
    c. Town council, school board agendas published prior to meetings
    d. TV 38 schedule published weekly
    e. Add a weekly comment column profiling individuals and groups making a positive community contribution
    f. Allocate more space to community calendar perhaps a larger monthly calendar format

Resources Needed

* Subscription money
* Advertising money
* Derry Pride Committee

Principal Leadership

* Someone with chutzpa
* State and local officials

Potential Obstacles

* Antagonizing the Derry News
* Timely availability of legislative calendars
* Cost to Derry News of adding new columns, space, Concord (legislative) coverage
* Channel 38 perceived as competition to Derry News
* Limited weekend reporter coverage

Timeline

* Six months

SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR GROUP BEHAVIOR . . . . . Action Step Coordinator
To Be Decided

Critical Steps to Implementation

* Frequent and thorough inter-group communication

Resources Needed

* Town council
* DSPG
* Each organization's members

Principal Leadership

* Town council
* DSPG

Potential obstacles

* Egos and personalities
* Turf
* "Too busy"
* Tunnel vision
* Lack of understanding of the importance of communication

Timeline

* Six months

IV. COMMUNITY IDENTITY..... Action Step Coordinator
Bill Zolla

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Market positive aspects of the town
* Mission statement (who we are, where were going)
* Entrance signs to town
* Reinforcement of missions goals & activities

Resources Needed

* Cooperation
* Money
* Education
* External resources with experience
* Use existing community events to foster neighborhood linkages
* Neighborhood identity
* Each develops best PR person

Principal Leadership

* Public relations coordinator
* Community activities committee
* Proactive leadership from elected officials

Potential Obstacles

* Overcoming bedroom syndrome
* Different opinions
* Personal agendas

Timeline

* Six months PR coordinator
* Six months mission statement - logo slogan
* Twelve month neighborhood organizations formed
* Twelve months community activity committee formed
* Twelve months signs with slogan & logo at all entrances to Derry
* Twelve months plan road map
* Eighteen months education of all Derry people
* Twenty-four months educate people outside
* Twenty-four months physical changes
* Thirty-six months protect & expand green areas
* Forty-eight months reevaluate plan
* Sixty months Derry leader in positive community identity

V. PLANNING. . . . . Action step coordinator
Jim MacEarchern

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Educate community about master plan
* Representatives forum for planning coordination
* Raising revenue
* Commitment - consistent updating of an organic plan
* Readers digest version of current plan

Resources Needed

* Involvement of all citizens
* Information distribution channels
* Places to meet and people coordination
* Money - capital reserve planning and funds

Principal Leadership

* Town administrator
* Council, planning board, school
* Master plan oversight group

Potential Obstacles

* Political continuity
* Financial limits
* Fractionalism
* Cacooning - isolation of family and individuals - groups

Timeline

* 12-1-95 Growth management plan
* 9-1-95 Readers digest version of current master plan
* 8-1-95 Community forum

VI. IMPROVING INTERGROUP RELATIONS. . . Action step coordinator Not Yet Assigned

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Develop a detailed directory of existing groups, programs including mission statement, contact, phone number
* Town fun day - "Celebration of Diversity"
* Create teen groups fostering intergenerational activities
* Establish a common project with tangible objectives for all groups to break-down parochialism

Resources Needed

* Computers, publication/printing, distribution, volunteers (Eagle Scout project)
* Space, advertising, public input, food (no vendors international pot luck supper)
* Survey - to all age groups (i.e. intergenerational activities, what would interest them?)
* Mass mailing for directory (surveys)
* Volunteers, students, Eagle Scouts, citizens at large

Principal Leadership

* Community action group
* Citizen volunteers

Potential Obstacles

* Lack of funds (maintaining directory)
* Apathy
* Insurance/liability (for events)
* Finding sponsors (business community) to offset funding problem

Timeline

* Directory - Dec. 96 completed
* "Celebration of Diversity" - June 5, '96
* Teen group survey - begin Sept. '95
* Establish common project - begin Oct. '95

VII. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF DERRY . . . . . Action step coordinator Jean Cleary

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Define downtown
* Traffic relief -4A or other avenue; need to communicate benefits, parking
* Market analysis
* Forum/work group - identify individuals and groups to participate
* Image - then market that image

Resources Needed

* Existing plans - identifying existing resources
* List of landowners/businesses
* Money/block grants (those who can train volunteers to write grants) co-op extension service
* Philanthropy - volunteerism
* Historic buildings - railroad corridor - restoration expertise

Principal Leadership

* Private sector to include bankers, retailers, manufacturers
* Agricultural landowners in transportation corridor
* Chamber, housing authority, DDPC, etc. not for profits
* Town government

Potential Obstacles

* Economic conditions, money/funding - competition
* Perceptions/attitudes/attrition/self-serving motives
* Lack of quality aesthetics/zoning
* Landowners

Timeline

* Establish work group
* Define downtown
* Examine existing plan
* Create new strategic analysis
    - Traffic
    - Parking
    - Image
    - Historic aspects
* Establish community vision - communicate it
* Establish goals to reach vision
* Begin

VIII. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION . . . . . Action step coordinator
Paul Ferguson, C. Wolfe

Critical Steps To Implementation

* Communication: electronic bulletin board; database; vol. news column
* Participation: mentoring, direct, personal invitation
* Pleasure: find ways to make it fun, social aspects
* Family: Participation through family needs, school/children activities
* Habitual: make citizen participation a habit

Resources Needed

* Communication
    - Electronic: internet account, systems manager, TV38, electronic bulletin board
    - Derry public library
    - Vol news letter; negotiate re-design of Weekender and Derry News to include weekly column, like Granite Status, which profiles (lists) activities and need for volunteers in Derry. Needs to be consistent format and location to assure easy of access.
    - Electronic database/list of volunteers: Consolidate volunteer resource lists on database; use bingo cards (mail-in) to gather information; maintained at town hall for open access; accessible by organizations searching for qualified (known interested) volunteers; privacy of data-volunteer purposes only. Demographic information for sorting the database.
* Mentoring: people taking the initiative to invite another; education for leaders and leadership in fostering mentor behavior.
* Pleasure: establish "fun" or intrinsic enjoyment/satisfaction as a fundamental goal in activity organization; intertwine socialization with the event or activity; end of activity "reward" function; stress the positive of the activity and "think" about the needs to be derived by the participant.

Principal Leadership

* Derry News/Lawrence Eagle Trib
* TV 38 committee
* Computer expert (electronic and database)
* School administrators
* Civic leaders

Potential Obstacles

* Privacy of information
* Lack of cooperation, financial resources or technology
* Availability of/to the data once created

Timeline

* Community calendar/d-news, 9/1
* Electronic bulletin board 6/96
* Volunteer database, 6 months
* Mentoring, Now
* Volunteer appreciation day, 9/15

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANT LIST

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Mr. Robert Bailey
Ms. Amber Beland
Ms. Jeannie Bennett
Mr. Glen Blanchard
Mr. Al Blicker
Mr. Mark Brassard
Ms. Marcia Briggs
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Mr. Craig Bulkley
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STEERING COMMITTEE

The Derry Strategic Planning Group

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